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ABSTRACT

This essay grew out of a discussion of a gathering of college and university trustees and presidents, and it suggests that current changes in the higher education landscape demand a new look at accountability and the role of trustees in the governance and management of institutions. Discussion of restructuring notes how the range of meanings attached to this term often spurs discord and uncertainty. Faculty suspect that restructuring is part of a mind-set that would impose the values, management, and metrics of for-profit enterprises on the academy. On the other hand, trustees know that an institution's response to rising costs and changed circumstances cannot simply be increased tuition. Restructuring in the best interests of institutions, the essay argues, requires a partnership between faculty, president and trustees. In addition, presidents can bridge the scholarly culture of faculty and the "outside" perspective of trustees. Trustees, however, must be prepared to take a more active responsibility in overseeing the framework within which the president and faculty formulate strategies and carry out decisions. The essay closes with specific recommendations for how trustees, presidents, and faculty can work together to address the relationship of mission, academic program, and finance. (JB)

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SPECIAL ISSUE

P-O-L-I-C-Y

July 1995
Volume 6
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PERSPECTIVES

Co-sponsored by the Association
of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
and the Pew Higher Education Roundtable

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A Calling to Account

He was a president in the company of other presidents as well as trustees, experienced enough to know the import of what he was about to say. Indeed, he asked his question so quietly that many of those around the table had to lean in to hear — though once said, no one needed it repeated. "Isn't it time," he asked, "for trustees to call their institutions to account?"

The subject of conversation had been the responsibilities of colleges and universities to the public. Like many such discussions, it had begun by asking why so many outside the academy had come to focus so intently on the issue of institutional accountability—on the need for colleges and universities to pay more attention to those they teach and to those that provide their funding. This president's query had recast the terms of the discussion, giving it a sharper, more personal twist, considering that so many in the room were themselves trustees. Suddenly the issue was no longer the invisible workings of the marketplace or the tortuous path of public regulation; it was the need for trustees to take more active responsibility for the performance of the institutions they were expected to govern.

The role of trustees in the workings of a college or university is an issue that, over the last two decades, has taken on increased importance. In an earlier time it was easier to regard trustee stewardship of an institution as an act of symbolic rather than actual responsibility. The fact that each year most institutions had more money to spend as well as students to teach yielded a separation between academic and financial functions, and hence responsibilities, that appeared as natural as it was safe. Between trustees and faculty there grew a sense of disengagement born of mutual respect in which responsibility was divided according to expertise. Trustees were expected to watch the money, thus assuring the institution's financial viability—approving though not necessarily shaping annual budgets, deciding the kinds of investments the institution would make in new buildings and equipment, providing leadership to the institution's fundraising efforts, establishing guidelines for and, in some cases, actually managing the institution's endowment. The president and faculty did almost everything else. In most cases it was faculty who managed the academic side of the enterprise, choosing their own officers, setting admissions standards, shaping as well as delivering the curriculum, and, above all, deciding who would have a permanent place among their ranks. By separating finance from the nature and delivery of the educational program, meddling and inappropriate behavior—on the part of faculty as well as trustees—was minimized and the harmony of the institution preserved. Apart from the trustees' responsibility to hire and fire the president, ordinarily in consultation with the faculty, there was little if any merging of financial oversight and academic governance.

The issue is the need for trustees to take more active responsibility for the performance of the institutions they are expected to govern.

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Just how separate the two realms became was probably best reflected by the quip of a faculty member at a research university who had first served as a consultant and later as a trustee to a well-known liberal arts college. To the college's academic officers he remarked, "When I was your consultant, you told me everything I needed to know about the college and paid me to boot. Now that I am a trustee, you tell me as little as possible and expect me to pay you."

It is a bargain that time and circumstance have now undone. All but the most well-endowed private institutions find themselves pulled between the effects of a diminishing pool of students capable of meeting the full tuition charged and the steady growth of costs in maintaining the academic program. Most private colleges and universities find themselves using more and more of their own moneys to fund their financial aid budgets, in effect discounting their stated tuition price at rates they cannot afford to sustain. Public institutions find themselves increasingly on their own financially, and yet increasingly subject to regulation in terms of their teaching loads, learning outcomes, and utilization of resources. Facing increased costs and diminished revenues, most institutions are again coming to understand just how intertwined questions of finance and program have always been. In this context, for example, tenure becomes, not just a means of ensuring the academic independence of the faculty, but a substantial financial commitment the institution can afford only by remaining flexible and responsive to a changing market for educational services—pressures from which tenure is, in fact, supposed to insulate the faculty. This perspective also casts in sharp relief how the increasing specialization of the curriculum carries real costs both in the kinds of academic support that specialization requires and in the need to rely increasingly on non-tenure-track faculty to provide the general instruction that precedes specialized study in a major.

It is, however, in the calls for institutional accountability that the consequence of regarding finance as somehow separate from academic program is most evident. If the faculty, through the president, are accountable to the trustees for ensuring that the institution lives within its means—and if the nature and delivery of the academic program serve both to determine revenues and shape expenses—then clearly, exercising financial oversight means taking responsibility for the oversight of the institution's academic programs. But that oversight function is exactly what many trustees have felt reluctant to perform. It is, no less, a function that most faculty and many presidents have been unwilling to share with an externally appointed board of limited expertise, no matter how deep the board members' affection for the institution as a whole.

Facing increased costs and diminished revenues, most institutions are again coming to understand just how intertwined questions of finance and program have always been.

The changing environment for higher education has encouraged a growing number of administrators, trustees, and even some faculty to ask anew, "Who ought to be responsible for what? How can both the financial viability and academic independence of the institution best be preserved? Who has, not just the right, but the obligation to hold the institution collectively accountable?" If the answers to such questions remain at best tentative, they nearly all begin with the same assumption: what is required is a closer, more effective working relationship among the three parties directly responsible for the governance and management of the institution: faculty, president, and trustees.

This essay, which is about that complex partnership, grows out of a special roundtable convened jointly by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) and the Pew Higher Education Roundtable in December 1994. The discussion brought together trustees and presidents of colleges and universities from across the country, both public and private, representing a range of institutional missions and constituencies. From the intensity of the discussion as well as the range of participants' reactions to the first draft of this essay, it is clear that the question of trustee-faculty exchange and shared responsibilities touches a nerve, yielding a heightened sense of concern and apprehension. The purpose of this essay, therefore, is not to proclaim, but to suggest—to recommend

courses of action that need to be discussed, tried on for size, and then adjusted depending on the individual circumstances institutions face. In that spirit, the essay is being published simultaneously in the Pew Higher Education Roundtable's *Policy Perspectives* and AGB's *Priorities*.

A Primer on "Restructuring"

The larger purpose of our AGB-Pew Roundtable was to consider the role of trustees in helping higher education institutions to undertake their own restructuring—a term almost certain to chill most members of the faculty and thus underscore the differences between the culture of academics and that of trustees. In private conversation, individual faculty members may acknowledge that fundamental changes could yield both a strengthening of academic programs and a reduction in costs. In larger, public forums, faculty are more likely to decry restructuring as part of a mindset that would impose the values, management, and metrics of for-profit enterprises on the workings of the academy. In this light, restructuring smacks of a world in which decisions are made top-down, the bottom line is the only measure of success, the "business" itself is the subject of the sentence and those comprised within it are at best objects of the verb—expendable if either the market or the means of production should change. Restructuring, as a faculty catch-word, thus becomes a synonym for forced change, for the abandonment of the traditions of academic governance, and for the dismantling of the established order of the academy, even to the extent of eliminating departments and releasing tenured faculty.

What is required is a closer, more effective working relationship among the three parties directly responsible for the governance and management of the institution: faculty, president, and trustees.

In the working world that most trustees inhabit, however, restructuring is a fact of life. Most executives, business owners, and other professionals serving on college and university boards understand the uncertainty, even the pain of the process; at the same time, they know the benefits that result from a restructured enterprise. Experience tells them that the need to restructure stems from answers to basic questions: "How can we improve the service offered? Can we becofne more efficient in the way we organize and carry out the service? Are there quality improvements and savings to be had in the adoption of new technologies?" In their roles as trustees of colleges and universities, they now find these questions inescapable. From their own experience as practicing professionals, they know that the institution's response to rising costs and changed circumstances cannot simply be one of raising tuition; what is required is a deeper concern with an institution's priorities and processes, and a willingness to make changes where appropriate.

Restructuring smacks of a world in which decisions are made top-down, the bottom line is the only measure of success, the "business" itself is the subject of the sentence and those comprised within it are at best objects of the verb—expendable if either the market or the means of production should change.

Those who are most successful in effecting change come to focus not just on the organization of the enterprise but on its products and services—what higher education would define as its outcomes. Successful change from this standpoint involves asking a set of additional questions: "How might the processes by which the institution educates its students be made more efficient? How can we make them simpler, more flexible, more quality-conscious, less expensive?" Restructuring may begin by identifying the desired outcome, product, or service and then designing "backwards" through a set of processes to achieve the outcome as effectively as possible. Quality is measured in terms of both the product ("Did we meet our specifications?") and the process ("Is it simple, integrated, efficient?").

A growing conviction among many trustees is that these kinds of questions ought to be asked of

the institutions on whose governing boards they serve: "Wouldn't the institution be better served if it took on a similar restructuring of its products and processes? Would such a commitment persuade the faculty to reconsider not just what they teach but when, where, and how they teach as well? Wouldn't a better, more sharply defined mission tell the institution what to cut and what to keep in times of financial crisis?" And the question that seems increasingly to underlie trustee discussion: "How can faculty come to accept that the public is demanding educational services that are better, faster, and more affordable?"

From their own experience as practicing professionals, trustees know that the institution's response to rising costs and changed circumstances cannot simply be one of raising tuition; what is required is a deeper concern with an institution's priorities and processes, and a willingness to make changes where appropriate.

When trustees are pushed, however, to define their intentions in asking these questions of the academy, it becomes clear that the term "restructuring" can evoke a range of meanings. Part of the difficulty is that the significance of the term seems to derive as much from individual experience as from any commonly understood definition. The instinctive fear within many institutions is that restructuring is a euphemism for downsizing, which is not necessarily the case. For some, restructuring means taking steps to ensure an institution's capacity to serve its students and sponsors as changes occur in knowledge, technology, and the demands society makes of higher education. Restructuring, from this perspective, means taking a view of the academy that stresses the well-being and effectiveness of the institution as a whole, rather than that of single parts in isolation; further, it is a disposition to view and evaluate the institution in terms of how well it serves the manifest needs of society—as opposed to considering only how well the academy satisfies its own intrinsic values. Sometimes the impetus to restructure is the desire to reach the next level of excellence, and sometimes it is the will to survive another semester. Some regard restructuring as a process of finding new ways to finance a college or university as traditional sources of funding diminish. Others argue that restructuring begins with the redefinition of executive authority and the declaration that the president is clearly in charge.

The range of meanings that thus attach to the term spurs discord and uncertainty whenever the discussion seeks to engage the campus as a whole. Like it or not, however, most institutions will find it necessary to restructure at least their undergraduate programs—and the administrative functions that support them—in the years immediately ahead. Changes in demographics, in the demand for higher education, in the willingness of the federal and state governments to support higher education—all are compelling institutions to rethink aspects of their operations, to design and put into place the means of providing better education to more students at lower cost.

A Required Partnership

One of the insights that is emerging from higher education's initial encounter with restructuring is the need for a more inclusive language to explain the character of the academy and define the roles of its principal stakeholders in setting and carrying out policy. Too much of the discourse now used to define higher education's purposes and processes is clustered at either end of a rhetorical scale that makes a virtue of exaggeration. At one pole, the missionaries would have academic institutions defined almost exclusively in terms of their commitment to a set of self-proclaimed, largely intrinsic values that celebrate the quest for knowledge while giving scant regard to the practical needs of either society in general or students in particular. At the opposite pole, the fiduciaries would have the market define the priorities and operations of educational institutions while paying equally scant attention to the traditions and values that give shape and purpose to the academy.

Neither caricature works. Indulging the ideal of the academy as a place of quiet contemplation designed principally to support faculty scholarship invites the withdrawal of public support on which

the academy depends. Remaking the enterprise as a business complete with a bottom line and a president cast as an "in-charge, take-no-prisoners" chief executive invites a prolonged confrontation over governance that detracts from an institution's ability to fulfill its core purposes. These caricatures also suggest that the successful restructuring of an institution requires a better, more productive partnership between those who tend to one or another extreme—which usually means between faculty and trustees. Their separate views need to balance and support one another more readily. The board and faculty need to be partners who understand that when either one exceeds or relinquishes its proper role, the result is an institution substantially diminished in its capacity to provide a meaningful education in effective ways.

In this partnership, trustees are expected to contribute a perspective grounded in the concept of the here and now—along with an appreciation for real money. They serve as sentries, vested with a clear conception of the institution's past as well as its future, keeping watch for changes on the horizon that could affect its continued well-being. In pursuit of a future that makes sense, their inclination is not to ponder indefinitely the arrangement of players and functions but to make a move and live by its consequences. While their initial focus may seem to be the bottom line, trustees' field of vision extends beyond the numbers to the values and goals that inform all strategic decisions within the institution. The fundamental role of trustees is to ensure that the president and faculty devise and implement strategies in fulfillment of the institution's mission.

Whether from a sense of self-imposed detachment, from deference to the mantle of academic authority invested in faculty, or from a divisiveness within their own ranks, trustees may defer from exercising their authority to monitor and ensure the institution's progress in fulfilling its mission. The result, too often, is an institution left to its own instincts and internal politics, without sufficient guidance from sensibilities vested outside the institution.

The president who reminded trustees of their obligation to call their institutions to account was seeking a more direct and purposeful engagement on the part of governing boards in the processes by which their institutions change. Trustees, he was suggesting, need to be more than "politely persistent" in guiding their institutions to make real decisions in a timely fashion.

Faculty, for their part, bring to the partnership perspectives that largely reflect their training. Like trustees, they are often innovative and even entrepreneurial, but their innovation takes place within frameworks defined more by the traditions of the academy itself than by the emergent needs of society. Faculty are concerned to preserve as well as to enhance the academic disciplines they have inherited. They are stewards of traditions of learning and inquiry, and they nurture these traditions with understandable zeal.

The internal politics of most institutions tend toward inaction—toward a status quo that evolves from the sum of individual behaviors rather than from a set of principles deliberately imposed. The instinct of faculty is to defer decisions, to preserve their own collegiality by waiting until a viable consensus has formed. Without immersing themselves in minute details of an institution, then, trustees need to be aggressive in ensuring that the structures and programs of the institution accord with both the mission and the basic goals of improving quality and efficiency. Above all, it is the trustees who empower a president to impress upon faculty that they are accountable not just to their academic disciplines, but to their institution, to their students, and to society. No one, least of all the student, is served when faculty are allowed to make the educational process a mystery that only they can understand. In their own worlds, trustees know how to ask good questions about both products and processes: "In light of our mission, what should our priorities be? By what process should we determine priorities? What are the marks of quality? How is quality control to be assured? How do we choose among competing goals, given the limited resources at hand?" These are the same questions that need to be asked of instructional programs.

While their initial focus may seem to be the bottom line, trustees' field of vision extends beyond the numbers to the values and goals that inform all strategic decisions within the institution.

Both trustees and faculty will have to give ground in this exchange, exhibiting a perhaps uncharacteristic patience in coming to understand both the language and the frame of mind through which the other party conceives of educational outcomes. In the course of reaching that point, trustees have an obligation to ask informed questions and to expect that faculty will take those questions seriously. Faculty in turn have an obligation to explain the institution's academic objectives and programs, to question trustees themselves if necessary, and ultimately to provide sensible answers that can help trustees and others gauge the overall performance of the institution.

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The President as Teacher

The president is a citizen of both cultures. While reporting to the trustees, the president carries a firm sense of the value of the scholarly calling, in most cases from having been a faculty member. Hence it is primarily the president who is expected to monitor and channel the tensions separating trustee and faculty domains. In the past, successful practice has meant turning that tension to productive ends, persuading each side to give ground, to moderate its style of discourse as well as to respect each other's separate realm of expertise. The president's authority derives from the trustees; without the force of trustee expectation, the president can easily be overwhelmed or stymied by the weight of academic tradition and the inertia of faculty procedures. At best, a president can embody a role that extends beyond that of facilitator to discover issues, uncover new goals, and synthesize strategy. At worst, the president becomes a victim, caught between immovable objects and irresistible forces—trapped between trustees who simply demand or provoke and faculty members who resist the notion of being accountable to any except their own values.

If, as we have argued, the successful restructuring of an institution requires a direct working relationship between trustees and faculty, it is the president who must foster that partnership. The first task is to convene a two-way conversation about restructuring itself. It is the president—as leader, manager, and above all teacher—who must establish the common ground between the concerns of trustees and of faculty. A variety of forums are available for convening the necessary conversations. Formal board meetings and the workings of board committees provide one set of often public opportunities for the trustees to make clear to the campus that, as trustees, they are asking questions that deserve considered answers. More likely to be productive, however, is an expanded set of structured activities that involve trustees and faculty both as individuals and as representatives of their constituencies. Trustees and faculty need to know one another better, to have repeated contacts, and to come together as working partners. Each party needs to become more comfortable with the other's perspectives and motivations. One of the primary benefits of a Pew Campus Roundtable, as most participating institutions readily attest, is the opportunity it provides for faculty, trustees, administrators, and others to speculate freely with one another, knowing that questions are meant to explore and answers to extend the field of conversation. Weekend retreats can serve much the same purpose, as long as both parties recognize the effort is an investment in further conversation and joint consideration, rather than a quick fix in the absence of more regular exchange.

Within the Pew Roundtable there are a few institutions that have experimented with joint committees composed of trustees, faculty, and senior officers. For the most part, these efforts have focused on building a strategic plan, broadly defining the principles and criteria—including the need to be more efficient and less costly—that will be used by the faculty as they recast the educational experiences the institution offers. It is necessarily a deliberative process, convened and shaped by the president. In its early stages, the process is

concerned as much with developing a common vocabulary and common goals as with outlining a strategic plan. It is also a process that inevitably provokes questions and concerns. The trustees want to know why the process takes so long—why so much talk is required when there is clear need for direct and purposeful action. The faculty—particularly those not serving on the committee—ask why they have not been consulted more, why the trustees are so much a part of a discussion focusing on the nature of the academic program, and "Why are we being asked to fix what really isn't broken?" To the president falls the dual task of keeping the process on track while moderating the polar concerns of those least involved—the kind of task any good teacher faces when leading a disparate class through a difficult assignment.

Trustee Preparedness

Joint partnerships among trustees, president, and faculty for restructuring occur less often in practice than this essay might seem to suggest. The factors that can impede an effective partnership include presidents who are reluctant, faculty who resist, and trustees who do not understand the nature of the responsibility they have assumed. In the best case, the motivations of trustees are more disinterested than those of a president or faculty, both of whom depend on the institution for their financial livelihood. The fact is, however, that for many of those who serve on governing boards, "disinterested" comes to mean simply uninformed; trustees often know too little about the institutions whose restructuring they would so readily undertake. Trustees of private institutions are still too often recruited for their ability to both "give and get" money—as ambassadors of good will and spokesmen for the institution's public interests. They are and see themselves primarily as volunteers, ready to give good advice and bear witness, but not really prepared for the task of governance. The boards of public institutions often find it difficult to maintain unified purpose, given the tendency of some to view their appointments as political rewards or as opportunities to micromanage the affairs of particular functions—intercollegiate athletics being the most obvious example. Public boards are often subject to agendas other than their own, having to respond to legislative and political mandates, often in public forums as required by a state's "sunshine" laws.

Above all, it is the trustees who empower a president to impress upon faculty that they are accountable not just to their academic disciplines, but to their institution, to their students, and to society.

In the most basic sense, trustee preparedness entails not just a willingness but the ability to take responsibility for the broad course of the institution. The trustee role is not to manage but to set the framework within which the president and faculty formulate strategies and carry out the strategic decisions of the organization. In taking on this role, trustees must avoid the tendency to immerse themselves in details that are the domain of the president and faculty; and they must avoid the other extreme of holding themselves so far aloof that they have no real engagement with the functioning of the institution. Trustees monitor the extent to which the institution is fulfilling its objectives both through direct questioning and in their requests for documentation. The board exerts the pressure of accountability on a culture that is otherwise prone to answer primarily if not solely to its own values and means of assessment.

Trustees who would carry out their responsibilities most effectively must be sensitive to values and concerns of faculty; at the same time, they must bring to bear a kind of scrutiny that derives from a perspective other than that of the faculty themselves. Trustees provide the occasion for testing the soundness of the academic programs—a process tantamount to reading the vital signs of any enterprise. The questions to be asked are simple but fundamental: "How well does the curriculum accord with the stated mission of the college or university? Do the offerings collectively provide an appropriate foundation of learning for students? How well do individual courses or programs accord with student needs and interests? Do the academic offerings represent the current state of knowledge and thinking within the disciplines? Do they employ teaching methods, materials, and equipment

known to be effective in fostering learning? How well do the faculty know their students? Does the educational value of a given program justify its cost? How well do the actual expenditures on academic program accord with the mission and goals of the institution? Are there ways of achieving the same educational ends at less cost?"

Beyond Conversation

The task of achieving a more productive working relationship among a board, president, and faculty is by no means small. A patient and thoughtful exchange in small groups may yield an enhanced state of understanding among a few individual faculty and trustees. But translating good conversation into purposeful action requires that there be orderly processes of institutional governance to implement change. In addition to the president, the roles of the chief academic officer, deans, department chairs, and formally designated faculty leaders are all critical to achieving faculty consensus for action within an institution. Each party must affirm the recasting of the terms of responsibility linking trustees, president, and faculty. With the question of the upper hand uppermost in everyone's mind, many will find any new arrangement to be threatening.

It is the president—as leader, manager, and above all teacher—who must establish the common ground between the concerns of trustees and of faculty.

If governing boards fall short of fulfilling the role accorded to them, it is often because they lack not just an effective vocabulary but an appropriate frame of reference for describing the objectives their institutions ought to seek. Trustees that are kept in the dark or that have not fully understood the important matters within an institution are often left with only a vague sense of something being very wrong. In such cases, the trustee impulse may be to lecture the president—and, by extension, the institution—about the need for hard-line restructuring to set things aright. The response of faculty to such stark talk is certain to be one of defensiveness and resistance at a time when cooperation is most needed.

While in business terms it is the need to restructure academic and administrative processes that frames the common agenda, it may be that the term "restructuring" itself needs to give way to a more productive idea that expresses better the kinds of change being sought in colleges and universities. "Renewal" is one possibility; the historical concept of "reformation" is another. The question facing most institutions is one of revitalization—a renewal of energy and commitment as well as a refashioning of how the institution goes about its business.

We believe that the cultures of individual campuses will call for different approaches to the process of renewal; each campus must address the challenges of its future largely without the benefit of universal templates. There are, however, some basic guidelines we think can help all institutions begin a renewal process. Our recommendations are simple to state, though their fulfillment entails an effort among the three parties on which the responsibility for maintaining quality and efficiency jointly rests.

Trustees, as we have suggested, are both guides and sentinels; they are singularly responsible for overseeing the process by which an institution establishes and fulfills its mission. Part of that responsibility is to make certain that the institution does not promise to be "all things to all people." Trustees should:

1. *Provide the spur that clarifies institutional mission.* An effective statement of institutional mission is one that knowingly strikes the balance the college or university seeks between undergraduate and graduate education—and between teaching, research, and service. Trustees cannot allow a broad commitment to "excellence, quality, and access" to substitute for effective design criteria capable of giving real shape and substance to the institution's academic programs.

2. *Integrate trustee oversight of academic planning and budgeting processes.* Monitor programs and expenditures to ensure that the institutional values as expressed in

the mission statement correspond to actual curriculum offerings and expenditures.

3. *Be proactive in monitoring the health of the institution.* Invest the time needed to be well informed about the workings of the institution. Exert the pressure of accountability that enables the institution to undertake necessary restructuring in a planned way, rather than as a response to crisis.

4. *Support the president during difficult times.* Make clear to the institution that the president is vested with authority conferred by the board, that the president's actions represent strategic steps to fulfill the broad policy objectives established, and that, as such, those actions have the board's support.

The role of the president is that of both chief executive and teacher, both maker of decisions and explainer of cases. Presidents should:

1. *Invest in trustee preparedness.* Teach the board to ask tough questions in ways that encourage and, on occasion, compel practical faculty responses. Help trustees understand what it means to play an appropriate, engaged role in academic affairs. Provide appropriate information that enables the board to fulfill its role effectively.

2. *Convene conversations* that draw together trustees and faculty as partners with a shared interest in the institution's academic and financial strength. Make clear, however, to both trustees and faculty that such conversations are a prelude to action as well as an invitation to reason together.

3. *Experiment with different organizational arrangements,* such as tri-partite committees (consisting of trustees, faculty, and senior officers) that have strategic responsibilities. Use the work of these special groups to demonstrate that the process is both deliberative and disciplined, and that it will reach and implement decisions within a set period of time.

4. *Exercise presidential leadership as the faculty confronts changing circumstances.* Use members of the board to bear witness to the kinds of change they have faced in their own professional worlds and to help impart that sense of urgency on which institutional renewal depends.

Faculty are the core of the institution, providing the teaching, research, and service that give meaning to the academic calling. They bear witness to the continuing ideal of the academy and its commitment to unfettered inquiry and scholarly excellence. What their own and their institutions' futures require is a clearer sense of the fiscal consequences of academic decisions, given the changed set of circumstances facing higher education. Faculty should:

1. *Learn how to ask good, even sharp, questions of trustees.* Faculty need to know about the trustees' perceptions of the markets for their academic programs and about the prospects for new funds and additional facilities. What will not work is for faculty to take on the mantle of investigative reporters, seeking information with the presumption that the trustees have something to hide. In an atmosphere of open exchange, faculty have not just the right but the responsibility to ask why—when it is the case—the educational and not the fiscal parameters are being called into question, and to remind trustees that a successful relationship depends on mutual understanding and a willingness to respect one another's values and goals.

The factors that can impede an effective partnership include presidents who are reluctant, faculty who resist, and trustees who do not understand the nature of the responsibility they have assumed.

2. *Separate discussions of educational goals from defenses of academic freedom and*

integrity. Faculty need to exhibit a greater willingness to talk with others in general and trustees in particular about the educational goals the institution seeks to achieve through its academic programs.

3. *Abandon the notion that every faculty member should have absolute veto power over every change that may affect him or her.* Demonstrate a willingness to move beyond a state of institutional inertia embodied in the posture of what William Massy and others have called "hollowed collegiality." Work together with institutional colleagues to address decisions that require a responsible decision on the part of faculty as a whole.

It is natural to wish that the circumstances of higher education, and of the nation at large, were such that the tradition of largely ritual interaction between trustees and faculty could be maintained. As a faculty member of a Pew Campus Roundtable pointed out, faculty and trustees "walk in different woods"—with different values, different goals, different ways of conceiving the purpose of a college or university. Perhaps it would be easier for both parties if the interaction between them could be largely symbolic and the necessary discussions of how money and academic programs relate few and far between.

It is a caricature that almost all of the parties would reject today—if for no other reason than because so many in higher education see their enterprises facing substantially altered and reduced circumstances. And yet, when faced with the prospect of moving forward jointly, almost everyone—faculty, trustee, and president—draws back to the comparative safety of separate realms: trustees responsible for overseeing institutional mission and finance; presidents charged with getting the job done while still somehow keeping faculty morale up; and faculty, while preserving the mysteries of their academic callings, investing new energy in undergraduate teaching. To mix the roles and responsibilities, many still suspect, is a recipe for confusion if not catastrophe.

Translating good conversation into purposeful action requires that there be orderly processes of institutional governance to implement change.

When the participants in the AGB-Pew Higher Education Roundtable reached this point in their deliberations, Martin Meyerson noted that a recent public opinion survey had shown generic admiration for higher education but complaints about its specifics. He reminded his colleagues of a story of a little girl who, when asked by her hostess if she liked asparagus, insisted that she did. Asparagus was served at dinner, and she left the vegetable untouched. When reminded of her avowed passion, the girl remarked, "Oh yes, I love asparagus very much—but not enough to eat it!"

We believe the successful restructuring of higher education depends on learning to eat the asparagus of trustee-faculty exchange and deliberation. It is now time for trustees and faculty to come together under the leadership of their president to address the relationship of mission, academic program, and finance. What we seek is that passion and dedication to an institution—the willingness to invest one's personal energy to ensure the continued success of the whole—that is the outcome of a process of renewal and reformation. In an important sense, California State University at Northridge was never more vital and intact, never fresher or more unified in its commitment to its mission than in the days and weeks following last year's earthquake that destroyed its campus. By all accounts, that most dramatic instance of "restructuring" brought about a unity of purpose and heightening of resolve that many believe the institution had not known before. No one would wish this extremity of institutional renewal on another member of the Pew Roundtable or any other institution of higher education, but there are few institutions that would not benefit from a collective rethinking of the ways they organize and deliver higher education in a time of both internal and external change. It is a process that requires a working partnership among those most responsible for their institution's future—the president, the faculty, and the trustees. No other task has a higher priority.

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"A Calling to Account" is based on a national meeting of higher education trustees and presidents, convened to discuss the dynamics of effective governance at a time when both society and institutions are changing. The following individuals served as participants in that discussion and helped to shape the resulting essay:

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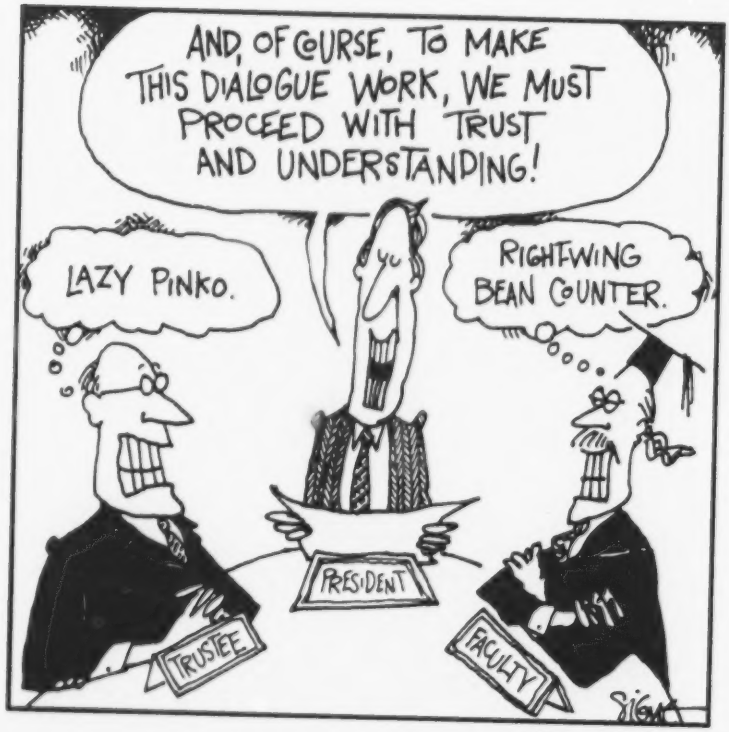

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